United Nations ST/IC/1999/58

Secretariat

3 August 1999

# Information circular*

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: **Competitive examination for promotion to the Professional category of staff members from other categories**

1. Many staff members have expressed concern with regard to the implications of paragraph 22 of section V of General Assembly resolution 53/221 of 7 April 1999, which reads, "*Requests* the Secretary-General to complete the realignment with the national competitive examination of the competitive examination for promotion to the Professional category and above of staff members from other categories, in particular regarding academic qualifications and equitable geographical distribution, as well as equal treatment with regard to probationary appointments".

2. I fully understand and share this concern. In the Fifth Committee, on 31 March 1999, I drew the Committee's attention to the implications of the inclusion in the draft resolution of a new element of equitable geographic distribution in the following way: "Allow me to draw the Committee's attention to the implications of the inclusion in paragraph 22 of section V of 'equitable geographic distribution' as part of the realignment of the national competitive examination and the G to P exams. The G to P exam, unlike the national competitive examination, is not a recruitment exam, but rather a promotion exercise for staff already in service in the Organization — the one and only means of promotion from the General Service category to the Professional category. Hundreds of staff compete each year for a very small number of posts. Hundreds more each year, at their own expense, continue their education to acquire a university degree with the hope that, one day, they may get the opportunity to sit for the G to P exams. The wording in paragraph 22 would mean that some serving General Service staff would be denied any opportunity for possible promotion because of and by reason of their nationality, which has never been a criteria for promotion, or a ground to deny promotion. This will be extremely damaging for staff morale since staff in all categories should be afforded opportunities for career growth with the Organization."

3. It is the Secretary-General's intention to bring this matter back to the General Assembly at its next session to inform the Assembly of the concerns of management and staff on this matter.

* Expiration date of the present information circular: 31 December 2000.

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4. Meanwhile, as indicated in paragraph 8 of ST/IC/1999/55 of 27 July 1999, in view of paragraph 22 of General Assembly resolution 53/221, all eligible candidates will be allowed to take the examination, but the results of the examination, including the marking of the papers of nationals of over-represented countries, will be subject to the outcome of the review of the issue by the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.